

CHAPTER 12: AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

While the residents of Tuolumne County enjoy some of the best air quality in the state, the growing population of the County is accompanied by routine sources of air pollution: vehicles, industrial facilities, open burning, woodstoves and earth-moving equipment. The air quality of the County is further diminished by the transport of pollutants from the more industrialized and populated San Joaquin Valley and Bay Area. As these upwind areas continue to address their air quality issues--thereby reducing their impacts on Tuolumne County--the County must also incorporate into its plans the measures necessary to facilitate growth while protecting the public health and welfare.

The key provisions of an Air Quality Element include reducing vehicular emissions through land use planning and transportation planning that promote public transit, pedestrian and bicycle access to homes, businesses, schools and civic centers; siting sources of industrial air pollutants away from residences and other sensitive receptors; and minimizing wood smoke from woodstoves and burning activities associated with fire hazard reduction and forest management practices.

By mitigating the air quality impacts of population growth, protection can be provided for one of the natural resources that attracts many to this area--clean air.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Economic Development

GOAL 12.A **Develop and sustain an air quality program that protects the public health and welfare while encouraging the economic vitality of local businesses and industries.**

Policies

- 12.A.1 Accurately determine and fairly mitigate the local and regional air quality impacts of land development projects proposed in the County.
- 12.A.2 Integrate land use planning, transportation planning, and air quality planning to make the most efficient use of public resources and to create a more livable environment.
- 12.A.3 Provide adequate sites for industrial development while minimizing the health risks to people resulting from industrial toxic or hazardous air pollutant emissions.

Implementation Programs

- 12.A.a Work with Other Agencies
 - Coordinate and cooperate with other local, regional and state agencies to develop a consistent and effective approach to air quality planning and management.
- 12.A.b Identify and Reduce Effects

Require significant air quality impacts identified during California Environmental Quality Act review to be consistently and fairly mitigated.

12.A.c Implement Feasible Control Measures

Require all air quality mitigation measures to be feasible, implementable and verifiable.

12.A.d Explore Alternatives

Consider, during the review process, alternatives or amendments for proposed projects that may reduce emissions of air pollutants.

12.A.e Foster Innovation

Encourage developers to implement innovative measures to reduce air quality impacts.

12.A.f Support Alternative Transportation Opportunities

Coordinate the Land Use, Circulation and Air Quality Elements of the General Plan to provide for support of proposed land use projects by a multi-modal transportation system and that the land uses themselves support the development of the transportation system.

12.A.g Consider Development's Effects on Transit

Consult with transit providers to determine project impacts on long range transit plans and require developers to mitigate the significant impacts identified.

12.A.h Assist with School Siting

Work closely with school districts to identify future school sites that are compatible with land use, transportation and air quality plans.

12.A.i Encourage Mass Transit Access for Low-Income Housing

Work with transit providers and developers to encourage the construction of low income housing developments that use transit-oriented and pedestrian-oriented design principles.

12.A.j Buffer Sensitive Receptors from Pollution Sources

Establish buffer zones to separate new residential development projects and projects categorized as sensitive receptors (e.g., hospitals, convalescent homes and schools) from industrial sites and/or sites that may emit toxic or hazardous pollutants.

12.A.k Buffer New Sources from Sensitive Receptors

Establish buffer zones to create an adequate distance between new air pollution point sources such as, but not limited to, industrial, manufacturing and processing facilities, and residential areas and sensitive receptors.

12.A.l Encourage Compliance with Air Quality Regulations

Require new industrial development to comply with all federal, state and local air pollution control regulations, including the implementation of best available control technology where required.

Motor Vehicles

GOAL 12.B Reduce traffic congestion and vehicle trips through more efficient infrastructure and support for trip reduction programs.

Policies

- 12.B.1 Create a land use pattern that will encourage people to walk, bicycle or use public transit for a significant number of their daily trips.
- 12.B.2 Develop a modern transportation system that incorporates alternative transportation modes into the system design.

Implementation Programs

- 12.B.a Support Availability of Alternative Transportation
- Encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation by incorporating public transit, bicycle and pedestrian modes in County transportation planning and by requiring new development to provide adequate pedestrian and bikeway facilities at suitable locations.
- 12.B.b Encourage Growth in Defined Communities
- Discourage discontinuous urban development and encourage a compact development pattern in and around defined communities through the General Plan land use diagrams.
- 12.B.c Seek Funding for Mass Transit
- Seek adequate funding for transit services so that transit is a viable transportation alternative. Consider requiring new development to pay its fair share of the cost of transit equipment and facilities required to serve new projects.
- 12.B.d Support Siting Schools Within or Adjacent to Communities
- Work closely with school districts to help them choose school site locations that allow students to safely walk or bicycle from their homes.
- 12.B.e Secure Pedestrian Facilities Near Schools
- Establish standards for new urban residential development to participate in the construction of pedestrian facilities necessary to allow children to safely walk to and from school or bus stops.
- 12.B.f Seek Grants for Sidewalks and Bike Trails
- Pursue state and federal funds earmarked for new bicycle path and transit improvements.
- 12.B.g Promote Park-and-Ride
- Work with Caltrans and transit providers to identify park-and-ride sites with convenient access to public transit.
- 12.B.h Plan Development to Reduce or Avoid Congestion
- Encourage new development to be planned to result in smooth flowing traffic conditions for major roadways. This includes traffic signals and traffic signal coordination, parallel

roadways and connections within and between neighborhoods where significant reductions in overall emissions can be achieved.

Energy Sources

GOAL 12.C Minimize air pollutant emissions from woodburning fireplaces and appliances.

Policies

12.C.1 Promote development that minimizes the use of energy sources that produce smoke and maximizes the use of energy conservation and clean or renewable energy sources.

Implementation Programs

12.C.a Limit New Fireplaces

Establish development standards to limit fireplace installations in new developments and prohibit such installations in areas of the County where resulting air quality impacts would be cumulatively significant.

12.C.b Mandate EPA-Certified Woodstoves

Require the installation of low-emitting, EPA-certified woodstoves or pellet stoves where such wood-burning devices are desired by the developers and/or future homeowners.

12.C.c Promote Energy Conservation

Encourage the incorporation of energy conservation into the design of residential and commercial buildings; such design considerations may include passive solar heating, supplemental solar water heaters, energy efficient lighting and additional insulation and weatherstripping.

Open Burning

GOAL 12.D Maintain an effective open burning enforcement program that protects the public health and welfare while recognizing the need to reduce vegetative matter for the purposes of fire hazard reduction, wildland vegetation management and forest ecosystem management.

Policies

12.D.1 Minimize the emissions and nuisance potential from residential open burning.

12.D.2 Work closely with federal, state and local agencies to minimize the emissions and nuisance potential from open burning activities associated with fire hazard reduction and forest management practices.

Implementation Programs

12.D.a Consider Alternative Disposal of Biomass that Reduces Open-Burning

Encourage alternative methods of disposal of vegetative matter, including, but not limited to, composting, mulching or transporting the material to biomass facilities that accept it.

- 12.D.b Promote Community-based Biomass Alternatives
- Support community programs that reduce residential open burning, such as local pick-up and delivery of vegetative matter to biomass facilities or composting projects that do not create a public nuisance.
- 12.D.c Maintain Burn Day Hotline
- Provide public information through the media and the Air Pollution Control District Burn Day/No-Burn Day Phone Recorder regarding the allowable materials and appropriate burn times associated with responsible open burning.
- 12.D.d Enforce Open Burning Regulations
- Enforce applicable federal, state and local regulations pertaining to residential open burning.
- 12.D.e Promote Non-Burning Alternatives for Fire Hazard Reduction
- Support alternative methods of fire hazard reduction in the forests, including, but not limited to, selective thinning of timber stands and chipping of slash for fuel in biomass-fired utility boilers.
- 12.D.f Cooperate to Plan Wildland Prescription Burning
- Coordinate and cooperate with other agencies to plan and monitor prescribed fires to minimize the impact on public health, taking into consideration the size and location of the proposed burn and the expected weather conditions, among other parameters.
- 12.D.g Play Active Roll in Future Smoke Management
- Participate in committees and task forces that are established for the purpose of developing and discussing smoke management policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act while effectively managing the resources of California.
- 12.D.h Continue Enforcing Open Burning Regulations
- Enforce applicable federal, state and local open burning regulations related to agriculture, wildland vegetation management, forest management, range improvement and fire hazard reduction.

Responsibility for Programs: Administration of the Implementation Programs listed in this Element is the responsibility of the Board of Supervisors, Air Pollution Control District, Planning Department, Department of Public Works, Fire Department, Department of Building and Safety and Environmental Health Division with the Air Pollution Control District serving as the primary administrator.

Funding Sources: Administration of the Implementation Programs listed herein will be funded through the County's General Fund, Health Fund, Rural Fire Fund and State Subventions.

Time Frame for Implementation: Implementation of the programs listed in this Element related to amending the County's development regulations will be completed by FY 97-98; all other programs are ongoing.